

6.

If you did this as the first step toward the unleashing of war, well then, it is evident that nothing else is left to us but to accept this challenge of yours. If however, you have not lost your self-control and sensibly conceive what this might lead to, then, Mr. President, we and you ought not now to pull on the ends of the rope in which you have tied the knot of war, because the more the two of us pull, the tighter that knot will be tied. And a moment may come when that knot will be tied so tight that even he who tied it will not have the strength to untie it, and then it will be necessary to cut that knot, and what that would mean is not for me to explain to you, because you yourself understand perfectly of what terrible forces our countries dispose.

Consequently, if there is no intention to tighten that knot and thereby to doom the world to the catastrophe of thermonuclear war, then let us not only relax the forces pulling on the ends of the rope, let us take measures to untie that knot. We are ready for this.

We welcome all forces which stand on positions of peace. Consequently, I expressed gratitude to Mr. Bertrand Russell, too, who manifests alarm and concern for the fate of the world, and I readily responded to the appeal of the Acting Secretary General of the UN, U Thant.

There, Mr. President, are my thoughts, which, if you agreed with them, could put an end to that tense situation which is disturbing all peoples.

These thoughts are dictated by a sincere desire to relieve the situation, to remove the threat of war.

Respectfully yours,

Oct 27, 1962. Con, Aleksandr Fomin, Counselor; SOV--James Ramsey

long talk on evening of October 27. Mr. Fomin took a very gloomy view of the situation, saying it was fraught with all kinds of dangers. He complained that there seemed to be a lack of communications between our two countries on problems currently troubling us and suggested specifically that there should be more direct contact between Ambs Thompson and Dobrynin. He proposed exploratory conversations which would have as their objective a search for possible areas of compromise.

Max Fomin stated that the personality of the President was a factor which introduced great complications into the situation and possibly lay at the root of the trouble. He said that the Pres had a "do or die" attitude and quoted several instances of what he considered intemperate behavior on his part. These were: the feud with Broynhill in Virginia, the dispute with the steel companies, and the incident in Oxford, Miss. Mr. F expressed the opinion that the President need not have let such issues come to an open conflict since there had been other possibilities open to him for handling them. He drew an analogy between these examples and the White House's handling of the most pressing problems in which the USSR was vitally interested. Mr. F said that the President, being Irish, was very headstrong and determined to have his way at all costs. When queried as to what he thought would be the best way of reacting to the actions of a President such as he had described, Mr. F made some equivocal remarks which could be interpreted as indicating a lack of decision on this point.

Mr. F said that the Cuba for Turkey proposal should be considered as a serious offer. He stressed repeatedly that the USSR was seeking equality of treatment on the international scene and that the American people should now finally understand what it meant to have missiles of a foreign power pointed at their country from a neighboring state of minor dimensions. He said his government was flexible on the details of any agreement and would not be demanding in terms of a definite time period (he mentioned specifically a year for withdrawal from Turkey).

Mr. F concluded on the rather rueful note that the US was taking advantage of the SU's current dispute with the Chinese to advance its demands at a time inopportune to Moscow.

((F had had fiery talk with S that afternoon?))

(shown to Sec on 31 Oct; question whether remarks on Pres should be shown to White House. DR: This should not be sent to the White House. It has been overtaken by events. This memo should have been in our hands within one hour after the conversation occurred.))

29 Oct: I gathered from Bundy that the Pres's feeling is that after the Cuban affair we can push our Allies harder than was the case before. ((re Berlin))

Thompson

25 Oct: Political Path. Following political actions might be considered: 1. A proposal in some forum to withdraw our missiles from Turkey in return for Soviet withdrawal of their missiles from Cuba. This might be expressed in generalized form, such as withdrawal of missiles from territory contiguous or in proximity of the territory of the other. 2. Alternative approach might be to have a proposal for the UN to send teams to Cuba and Turkey to take control over the missiles there pending the outcome of negotiations. U Thant might be put up to advancing such proposals.

Oct 30: (going for complete removal of Soviet-Cuban tie, we would have to go much further in guarantee against invasion and attacks by emigre groups; might tie our hands later, with undesirable precedents for Berlin.)

Going only for nuclear weapons out of Cuba would permit conditional guarantee against invasion.

Oct 31; memcon with Yuri Zhukov, Foreign Editor of Pravda and Georgi Bolshakov, editor of USSR MAG.

I also pointed out the extremely difficult position in which the Soviet action in sending missiles to Cuba had placed the Pres. He had gone on record in the midst of an election campaign as saying that Cuba had only defensive arms and his political opponents were making the most of this.

((On reversal of Oct 27 from Oct 26 letters): I said our press had speculated ((Thompson?)) that Mr. K had made the first proposal and had been overruled. Zhukov said immediately he was certain this wasn't the case and that Mr. K was still the boss. He said he was not in Moscow at the time but his guess would be that the talk in this country and elsewhere by the press and others that there was a possibility of a Cuban-Turkish deal had led the Kremlin to put this forward in their interests in finding a solution. Mr. Bol. emphasized that there was much talk around New York about this matter. (?))

((Who predicted Sovs would get out without this? Rostow apparently believed.))

On leaving, Bolshakov complained of a particular picture published in US News and World Report showing the Pres talking to Gromyko and Dobrynin which labeled the Sov officials as liars. Bolshakov said he could assure me that neither Gromyko nor Dobrynin knew of this development (presumably the installation of medium-range missiles in Cuba).

3 Nov: memcon, with Dob, Nov 3.

At end of conversation, as he was leaving, I said that he must have been in a very awkward position over this whole thing and he said that this was quite true, and declared categorically that he had not known of the Soviet operation in Cuba. I said that I believed his statement and felt sure that Sec Rusk did also.

Nov 6, draft reply to Nov 5 letter

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am surprised that in your letter, which I received yesterday, you suggest that in giving your representative in New York a list of the weapons we consider offensive there was any desire on our part to complicate the situation.

The ~~substantive~~ solution of the Cuban affair was established by my letter to you of Oct 27 and your reply of Oct 28. You will recall that in my letter of Oct 27, I referred to "all weapons systems in Cuba capable of offensive use." You will also recall that in my broadcast address of Oct 22 that in addition to medium-range ballistic missiles, I mentioned specifically "jet bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons," as "an explicit threat to the peace and security of all the Americas." Finally, my proclamation of Oct 23 entitled "Interdiction of the Delivery of Offensive Weapons to Cuba" specifically listed bomber aircraft. These facts were all known at the time of our exchange of letters on Cuba. I cannot believe

that there could have been any doubt in your mind that Il-28s, capable of carrying nuclear weapons, were included. ((In short: you are lying again!))

Your letter says--and I agree--that we should not complicate the situation by minor things. But I assure you that this matter of Il-28s, is not a minor matter for us at all. ((del: or any possible future matter of submarines)) It is true, of course, that these bombers are not the most modern of weapons, but they are distinctly capable of offensive use against the US and other Western Hemisphere countries, and I am sure your own military men would inform you that the continued existence of such bombers in Cuba would require substantial measures of military defense in response by the US. Thus, in simply logic these are weapons capable of offensive use. But there is more in it than that, Mr. Chairman. These bombers could carry nuclear weapons for long distances, and they are clearly not needed, any more than missiles, for purely defensive purposes on the island of Cuba. Thus their continued presence would sustain the grave tension that the missiles, produced, and their removal, in my view, is quite as necessary to a good start on ending the recent crisis.

...I think I should go on to give you a full sense of the very strong feelings we have about this whole affair here in the US.

These recent events have given a profound shock to the relations between our two countries. It may be said, as Mr. Kuznetsov said the other day to Mr. McCloy, that the SU was under no obligation to inform us of any activities it was carrying on in a third country. But I cannot accept this view; I think you would not either, if the activities being carried on in a third country were such as to threaten a major alteration in the world balance of power upon which our present uneasy peace depends. ((preceding questioned; modified?)) And however one may judge that argument, the fact of the matter is that not only that we were not informed of what your Government was doing secretly in Cuba, but that active steps were taken to mislead us about what was being done.

I do not refer here only to the TASS article of September, but also to communications which were addressed to the highest levels of our Government through channels which heretofore had been used for confidential messages from the highest levels of your Government. Through these channels we were specifically informed that no missiles would be placed in Cuba which would have a range capable of reaching the US. ((Bolshakov?)) In reliance upon these assurances ((?)) I attempted, as you know, to restrain those who were giving warnings in this country about the trend of events in Cuba. Thus undeniable

3.

I think we must both recognize that it will be very difficult for any of us in this Hemisphere to look forward to any real improvement in our relations with Cuba if it continues to be a ((delete: significant)) military outpost of the Soviet Union. We have limited our action at present to the problem of offensive weapons, but I do think it may be important for you to consider whether a real normalization of the Cuba problem can be envisaged while there remain in Cuba large number of Soviet military technicians, and major weapons systems and communications complexes under Soviet control, all with the recurrent possibility that offensive weapons might be secretly and rapidly reintroduced. In this connection in particular, we must attach the greatest importance to the assurance you have given, that submarine bases will not be established in Cuba.

In summary, I believe that Cuba can never have normal relations with the other nations of this Hemisphere unless it ceases to allow its territory to be used militarily by a foreign power from outside the Hemisphere and adopts a peaceful course of non-interference in the affairs of its sister nations. These wider ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ considerations may belong to a later phase of the problem, but I hope that you will give them careful thought.

In the immediate situation, however, I repeat that it is the withdrawal of the missiles and bombers, with their supporting equipment, under adequate verification, and with a proper system ~~xxxx~~ for continued safeguards in the future, that is essential. This is the first necessary step away from the crisis, to open the door through which we can move to restore confidence and give attention to other problems which should be resolved in the interests of peace.

((or, earlier: awayx from the crisis, and unless we take it promptly, I do not see how renewed action on our side can be avoided.))

Dec 11, 1962

Dear Mr. President:

It would seem that you and we have come now to a final stage in the elimination of tension around Cuba. Our relations are already entering now their normal course since all those means placed by us on the Cuban territory which you considered offensive are withdrawn and you ascertained that to which effect a statement was already made by your side.

That is good. We appreciate that you just as we approached not dogmatically the solution of the question of eliminating the tension which evolved and this enabled us under existing conditions to find also a more flexible form of verification of the withdrawal of the above mentioned means. Understanding and flexibility displayed by you in this matter are highly appreciated by us but though our criticism of American imperialism remains in force because that conflict was indeed created by the policy of the US with regard to Cuba.

More resolute steps should now be taken to move towards finalizing the elimination of this tension, i.e. you on your part should clearly confirm at the UN as you did at your press conference and in your messages to me the pledge of non-invasion of Cuba by the US and your allies having removed reservations which are being introduced now into the US draft declaration in the Security Council and our representatives in NY should come to terms with regard to an agreed wording in the declarations of both powers of the commitments undertaken by them.

I believe that you already had an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the text proposed by us of a brief declaration of the Sov Gov in which the SU's main commitments resulting from the exchange of messages between us are formulated. We proceed from the assumption that an analogous brief declaration should be made by the US Gov and that the main US commitments resulting from the exchange of messages will also be fixed in it. Have a look, Mr. President, at this proposal submitted by us through your representatives in New York.

But notwithstanding what the agreement on the concrete texts of our declarations at this concluding stage will be, anyway the basic goal has been achieved and tension removed. I will tell you frankly that we have removed our means from Cuba relying on your assurance that the US and its allies will not invade Cuba. Those means really had the purpose of defending the sovereignty of Cuba and therefore after your assurance they lost their purpose. We hope and we would like to believe--I spoke of that publicly too, as you know--that you will adhere to the commitments which you have taken, as strictly as we do with regard to our commitments. We, Mr. President, have already fulfilled our commitments concerning the removal of our missiles and Il-28 planes from Cuba and we did it even ahead of time. It is obvious that fulfillment by you of your commitments cannot be as clearly demonstrated as it was done by us since your commitments are of a long-term nature. But it is important to fulfill them and to do everything so that no doubts are sown from the very start that they will not be fulfilled. I already told you at one time that our friends especially those of them who regard us with certain lack of understanding are trying to convince us that imperialism cannot be trusted, that is that you cannot be trusted, as a representative of such capitalist state as the United States of America.

It goes without saying that you and I have different understanding of these questions. I shall not go into details as to what my understanding is because in this regard you and I cannot have common opinion since we are people representing different political poles. But there are things that require diff common understanding on both sides and such common understanding is possible and even necessary. This is what I would like to tell you about.

Within a short period of time we and you have lived through a rather acute crisis. The acuteness of it was that we and you were already prepared to fight and this would lead to a thermonuclear war. Yes, to a thermonuclear world war with all its dreadful consequences. We took it into account and, being convinced that mankind would never forgive the statesmen who would not exhaust all possibilities to prevent catastrophe, agreed to a compromise although we understood--and we state it now-- that your claims had no grounds whatsoever, had no legal basis and represented a manifestation of sheer arbitrariness in international affairs. We agreed to a compromise because our main purpose was to extend a helping hand to the Cuban people in order to exclude the possibility of invasion of Cuba so that Cuba could exist and develop as a free sovereign state. This is our main purpose today, it remains to be our main purpose for tomorrow and we did not and do not pursue any other purpose.

Therefore, Mr. President, everything--the stability in this area and not only in this area but in the entire world--depends on how you will now fulfill the commitments taken by you. Furthermore, it will be now a sort of litmus paper, an indicator whether it is possible to trust if similar difficulties arise in other geographical areas. I think you will agree that if our arrangement for settling the Cuban crisis fails it will undermine a possibility for maneuver which you and we could resort to for elimination of danger, a possibility for compromise in the future if similar difficulties arise in other areas of the world, and they really can arise. We attach great significance to all this, and subsequent development will depend on you as President and on the US Government.

We believe that the guarantees for non-invasion of Cuba given by you will be maintained and not only in the period of your stay in the White House, that, to use an expression, goes without saying. We believe that you will be able to receive a mandate at the next election too, that is that you will be the US President for six years, which would appeal to us. At our times, six years in world politics is a long period of time and during that period we could create good conditions for peaceful coexistence on earth and this would be highly appreciated by the peoples of our countries as well as by all other peoples.

Therefore, Mr. President, I would like to express a wish that you follow the right way, as we do, in appraising the situation. Now it is of special importance to provide for the possibility of an exchange of opinion through confidential channels which you and I have set up and which we use. But the confidential nature of our personal relations will depend on whether you fulfill--as we did--the commitments taken by you and give instructions to your representatives in New York to formalize these commitments in appropriate documents. This is needed in order that all the peoples be sure that tension in the Caribbean is a matter of yesterday and that now normal conditions have been really created in the world. And for this is necessary to fix the assumed commitments in the documents of both sides and to register them with the UN.

3.

You, Mr. President, do not want to agree with the five conditions put forward by Prime Minister of the Republic of Cuba Fidel Castro. But, indeed, these five principles correspond fully to the provisions of the UN Charter which is a legal basis for the relations among states, a sort of foundation for securing peace and peaceful coexistence. I will tell you frankly that such position of yours is surprising. Maybe you have some difficulties. But, Mr. President, we who occupy such responsible position in the world and who are endowed with high trust, have to overcome these difficulties. The peoples will appreciate that because for them it means ensuring lasting peace on earth.

It would like to express to you my disapproval of certain things. We read now various articles by your columnists and correspondents and we are concerned that in those articles they are widely commenting on the confidential exchange of opinion and it is being done by the people who as it ~~seem~~ would seem have to relation to confidential channels set up between us. Judging by the contents of these articles it is clear that their authors are well informed and we get an impression that this is not a result of an accidental leak of the confidential information but a result of benevolence for those people into whose hands gets the information they make public. This evidently is done for the purpose of informing the public in a one-sided way.

Frankly speaking, if we use the confidential communications this way, it will be far from facilitating confidence in those channels. You yourself realize that if your side begins to act in the way that our exchange of opinion by way of confidential channels will leak through finger those channels will cease to be of use and may even cause harm. But this is up to you. If you consider that those channels have outlived themselves and are of no use any longer, then we also will draw appropriate conclusions in this respect. I tell you this straightforwardly and I would like to know your opinion on this matter. I have been denouncing American imperialism. But on the other hand I consider it useful for us to continue to maintain the possibility of confidential exchange of opinion because a minimum of personal trust is necessary for leading statesmen of both countries and this corresponds to the interests of our countries and peoples, to the interests of peace all over the world.

Let us, Mr. President, eliminate promptly the consequences of the Cuban crisis and get down to solving ~~our~~ other questions, and we have them in number. As far as nuclear test ban is concerned this is a minor question on the whole. I am going to address to you a confidential letter and proposals on this question and I hope that we will overcome difficulties existing in this question. The problem of disarmament is a different matter; it is a major and difficult question now.

But, of course, the main question is the German question and it is an easy and at the same time difficult one. I say that it is an easy and at the same time difficult question. But this is really so. It is easy because our proposals for concluding a peace treaty do not demand any concessions from either side, neither do they demand any losses from either side. These proposals only fix the situation which has developed as a result of World War II.

After the talks that our Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Gromyko had with your Secretary of State D. Rusk, only one question in effect remained unresolved--that of troops in West Berlin: troops of what countries, for what term and under what flag will be stationed there.

4.

I would like you to understand me correctly on this question. Let us solve it. We will not escape the necessity to solve this question anyway. To tell the truth, this question is not worth an eggshell if a realistic approach is employed in appraising the situation in Germany where two sovereign German states have developed and if a course followed is aimed at an agreement on West Berlin and not at leaving it to remain a dangerous hot-bed of collision between states. Should really you and we--two great states--submit, willingly or unwillingly, our policy, the interests of our states to the old-aged man who both morally and physically is with one foot in the grave? Should we really become toys in his hands? By concluding peace treaty we would lose nothing but we would gain a possibility to strengthen friendly relations between our states, would untie the knot in Europe which is fraught with danger for the whole world only because most extreme aggressive militarist forces in West Germany are interested in this.

Please excuse me for my straightforwardness and frankness but I believe as before that a frank and straightforward exchange of opinion is needed to avoid the worst.

Please, convey to your wife and your whole family wishes of good health from myself, my wife and my entire family.

December 14, 1962

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I was glad to have your message of December 11th and to know that you believe, as we do, that we have come to the final stage of the Cuban affair between us, the settlement of which will have significance for our future relations and for our ability to overcome other difficulties. I wish to thank you for your expression of appreciation of the understanding and flexibility we have tried to display.

I have followed with close attention the negotiations on the final settlement of the Cuban question between your representative, Mr. Kuznetsov, and our representatives, Amb. Stevenson and Mr. McCloy, in New York. In these negotiations we have tried to understand your position and I am glad to note that Mr. Kuznetsov has also shown effort to understand our problems. It is clearly in the interest of both sides that we reach agreement on how finally to dispose of the Cuban crisis. To this end, Amb. Stevenson and Mr. McCloy presented on Wednesday a new draft of a joint statement which by now has certainly reached you. I wish to assure that it is our purpose to end this affair as simply and clearly as possible.

You refer to the importance of my statements on an invasion of Cuba and of our intention to fulfill them, so that no doubts are sown from the very start. I have already stated my position publicly in my press conference on November 20th, and I am glad that this statement appears to have your understanding; we have never wanted to be driven by the acts of others into war in Cuba. The other side of the coin, however, is that we do need to have adequate assurances that all offensive weapons are removed from Cuba and are not reintroduced, and that Cuba itself commits no aggressive acts against any of the nations of the Western Hemisphere. As I understand you, you feel confident that Cuba will not in fact engage in such aggressive acts, and of course I already have your own assurance about the offensive weapons. So I myself should suppose that you could accept our position-- but it is probably better to leave final discussion of these matters to our representatives in New York. I quite agree with you that the larger part of the crisis has now been ended and we should not permit others to stand in the way of promptly settling the rest without further acrimony.

With regard to your reference to the confidential channels set up between us, I can assure you that I value them. I have not concealed from you that it was a serious disappointment to me that dangerously misleading information should have come through these channels before the recent crisis. You may also wish to know that by an accident or misunderstanding one of your diplomats appears to have used a representative of a private television network as a channel to us. This is always unwise in our country, where the members of the press often insist on printing at some later time what they may learn privately.

Because our systems are so different, you may not be fully familiar with the practices of the American press. The competition for news in this country is fierce. A number of the competitors are not great admirers of my Administration, and perhaps an even larger number are not wholly friendly to yours. Here in Washington alone we have 1200 reporters accredited to the White House alone, and thousands more in other assignments. Not one of them is accountable to this government for what he reports. It would be a great mistake to think that what appears in newspapers and magazines necessarily has anything to do with the policy and purpose of this government. I am glad to say that I have some friends among newspapermen, but no spokesmen.

But let me emphasize again that we do indeed value these confidential channels. I entirely share your view that some trust is necessary for leading statesmen of our two countries; I believe that it is important to build the area of trust wherever possible. I shall of course continue to hold and to express my convictions about the relative merits of our systems of government, and I shall not be surprised if you do the same.

In particular, we have been very glad to have opportunities for private exchanges with and through Mr. Bolshakov, and I am sorry to learn that he is returning to Moscow. It is our impression that he has made a real effort to improve communications and understanding between our two governments, and we shall miss him very much.

I appreciate your writing me so frankly, and in return I have ~~tried~~ tried to be as straightforward, for I agree with you that only through such frank exchanges can we better understand our respective points of view. Partly for this reason I refrained in my last press conference from commenting on certain aspects of your speech before the Supreme Soviet with which you realize, of course, we could not agree.

We also are hopeful that once the Cuban crisis is behind us, we shall be able to tackle the other problems confronting us and to find the path to their solution.

I cannot refrain from commenting briefly on your reference to the German question, though I do not think that it would be useful in this message to expound our full position once again. But your suggestion that the interests of our two countries are toys in the hands of Chancellor Adenauer seems to me to miss entirely the true nature of the problem which confronts us in ~~European~~ Central Europe. For here the vital interests of many states are involved--on your side as well as ours. If this is recognized, then I am confident that a way can be found which will accommodate these interests and which will lead to a peaceful settlement. I cannot quite agree with you that Mr. Kusk and Mr. Gromyko have settled everything on Berlin but one issue. They are skillful and experienced diplomats, but I do not think we should give them too much credit yet. Still it is quite true, as you say, that the main issue which seems to separate us on Berlin is that of the presence of allied troops in West Berlin. I am confident that if you could bring from an understanding of our position on this vital point, our chances of making progress would be greatly improved.

3.

I look forward to receiving your confidential letter and proposals on the test ban question, and I think there is every reason to keep working on this problem. I hope that in your message on this subject you will tell me what you think about the position of the people in taking on this question. It seems to me very important for both of us that in our efforts to secure an end to nuclear testing we should not overlook this area of the world.

Thank you for your expressions of good wishes to me and my family, and let me in turn send you and your wife and family our personal good wishes for the coming year.

New York Times Mag, Nov. 18, 1962

Mr. K said that even though he had had many difficulties with General Eisenhower, he was certain that, if Eisenhower were President at this time, the problem of Cuba would have been handled in a much more mature manner. He stated he would hate to believe that President Kennedy's decision was due to the fact that we were having elections in the near future in the US. In any event, he observed Pres. Kennedy had embarked on a very, very dangerous policy, whether because of American misdirections or the President's youth.

20 July, 1962 K-Thompson (20 July)

K said what modern science had been able accomplish was "awful" in real sense of word. He made this remark not in effort to frighten or threaten anyone. He said he always told his military people whenever they showed him some new development that they must realize other side not stupid and able accomplish same thing. He said level of science in both countries about same and what one could do, other could do also.

Throughout conversation K made many references to U-2.

In discussing disarmament...I said...our whole effort in this field seemed breaking down because of Soviet obsession with secrecy which I believed based on outdated analysis. I cited Telstar as latest evidence world shrinking and said whatever advantage they had from secrecy wasting asset. K responded it might be true they gave too much attention ~~in~~ and importance to secrecy but said on our side our military obsessed with desire acquire ever more information. He said of course every country had spies but sending U-2 across frontier was essentially act of war. We wanted to know where their rocket bases were but these like anything else could be camouflaged. ((had just started?)) I said it was natural human trait to fear unknown but pointed out this not to their advantage since it caused our military to prepare to meet threats which might not exist. K said he was more concerned now with use of outer space than with planes but said his own people had shown him photos (not clear whether from planes or satellites but I inferred latter) showing airfield or factories and even planes on field, but not showing what purpose of planes was or what factories produced. Always possible conceal essential information.

With regard to our zonal proposal K said there were only limited number of Soviet rocket bases and we knew where they are. It would therefore be simple for us to arrange to inspect them all. ... He said essence of disarmament problem was that we wanted to take away weapon with which they could hit us while preserving our overseas bases for use against them. ((He was about to acquire base))

....
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K said he had another subject to discuss even though he disliked bringing up unpleasant matter on my last visit. He had read report first Rusk-Gromyko conversation and half of second but it was already clear our dialogue was coming to end. He would have no choice but to proceed with signature of treaty after which our rights there, including right of access, would end. He emphasized that East Germans were allies and Soviets would stand by them. On this occasion and others in conversation he showed great sensitivity to what he considered threats and said Soviet Union great power, not small country which could be threatened with impunity. Pres had suggested time would make solution easier but he could not wait indefinitely. From some things Sec Rusk had said we apparently had idea of attending talks, but this not acceptable. Sov govt had tried many different proposals to find solution but we insisted on maintaining occupation in center of sovereign GDR.

...Lxxx Thompson: It was Soviet side and not we that had focussed world attention on Berlin to point where smallest thing became test of our intentions. I pointed out that psychology of people of Berlin and West Germany had become very important. Many people on our side felt that acceptance of Soviet proposals meant we would lose not only Berlin but rest of Germany and consequently all of Europe. I said that they, and we knew what Ulbricht wanted in West Berlin. K had himself said that our troops in Berlin had no military value and we agreed with this appraisal, but they were essential to maintain confidence of people of Berlin.

K said we often referred to prestige but did not take into account prestige of Soviet Union. Continuance of occupation would be humiliating to East Germany and Soviet Union. He said we also referred to our commitment to people of Berlin but we had no right to make such commitment when it involved interests of allies who had made enormous sacrifices in war. I said I thought in matters of this kind it was important to try to get other persons point of view. I asked him what he would do if he had Soviet troops in similar situation and we said we would cut them off. I knew he would respond that he would sign treaty and withdraw (before interpreter reached this sentence K interjected to say exactly that). I got impression that this remark had some effect. K said he was considering bringing matter before UN and in this connection made some vague reference to possible commission of jurists--in order that SU could make clear its position before signing treaty. He said he was discussing this possibility with his colleagues but no decision had been taken and he had not made up his own mind whether this was best course but it had certain appeal for him.

This part of conversation ended by my telling him he should find way to give us better choice of alternatives than those now before us and...he was cordial throughout discussion and I had impression he considered he had to move ahead but was deeply troubled. He emphasized many times that this was the one problem standing in way of good relations between us and I believe he is sincere in this.

St Foreign Office transcript of Berlin-UK remark:

UK and its allies are even threatening war in connection with our intention to conclude a German peace treaty and settle the West Berlin question on that basis. In view of this the thought has occurred to us in some way or other to interest the USSR in removing such a threat on the part of the Western Powers, if it were to arise in connection with the signing by us of a German peace treaty.

Thomp: I believe above represents considerably modified version of what actually was said.

((So this was proposal K was going to bring to UK--after elections--and after missiles operational!))

A asked me to speak to Pres about our harassment of Soviet ships. He cited both air inspection and one case where American ship had commanded Soviet ship stop or be fired on. He said these virtually act of war and if continued Soviets would have to reply in kind, but wished avoid warlike actions.

I have taken up this problem several times before and can only repeat my strong conviction that whatever value we may gain from our identification of Soviet ships in this way, we are paying too high a price for it in effect it has upon top Soviet leadership. This was almost only time in our long conversation when K spoke with any heat. He said SU was great power and could not tolerate being treated in this way. He said he doubted Pres knew about this personally and had considered writing him letter about it.

....

Reflecting upon my talk with K have following conclusions:

1) Am more convinced than ever that he at least does not intend push Berlin question to point of real risk of war. Much will depend, however, on attitude his colleagues and allies as well as upon how we handle the matter....suggest we must be extremely careful on the one hand to show we are serious in our determination to defend Berlin and on other to avoid engaging their prestige particularly in the military field as they are unbelievably sensitive about this. I think, for example, we should for the present play down any boasts about our military superiority and in Berlin itself avoid any action that could be considered by them as annoyance on our part. At same time we should proceed vigorously with contingency planning which they will know about but without publicity.

I believe K is likely to bring Berlin problem ~~xx~~ before UN and probably will personally present Soviet case.

...I doubt that we will get anywhere on real disarmament at this time. I got impression, however, that K will be prepared seriously to consider steps to prevent war by accident or miscalculation. If we can get over the Berlin hump and then let him know our intelligence capabilities we might make progress on GCD.

Thomp: The mere fact that K asserted he could achieve his seven year plan without disarmament convinces me that the opposite is the case...

K told me SO had suffered from drought in some areas and excess rain in others but that crop would be about best they had ever had. In my opinion this almost certainly untrue and knowing K believe if this were fact he would have emphasized it much more strongly.